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ABSTRACT

A system of identifying teacher and student interactions as they relate to discipline problems was developed and validated as a method of resolving disruptive classroom behavior. SOBAD (Systematic Observation of Behavior with a Focus on Academic Disruptions) involves the use of trained observers who code and record student and teacher interactions according to ten validated behavior categories: (1) transition; (2) teacher or student instructional activity; (3) noninstructional student talk; (4) noninstructional student action; (5) confusion; (6) disruption of academic mode not initiated by teacher or student; (7) criticism; (8) unnoticed disruptive behavior; redirection; and (10) praising nonacademic behavior. A twenty hour training program for three trainees tested the reliability of the system. It is suggested that the SOBAD system be discussed in teacher or administrator inservice training and in teacher preparation programs. Appendices include a list of the ten behavior categories, an example of SOBAD data obtained during a typical classroom observation, and information concerning SOBAD workshops. (FG)

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THE DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING OF A SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT WITH A FOCUS ON ACADEMIC DISRUPTION IN THE CLASSROOM (SOBAD)

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Texas A&M University

Results of recent surveys indicate that administrators, teachers, parents, and students have expressed a common concern over the lack of classroom discipline. Today I shall present a method that we may use in our efforts to deal with this common problem.

During the past two years I have developed a systematic method of observation for analyzing student and teacher behavior in the classroom. The name of this system is Systematic Observation of Behavior With a Focus on Academic Disruptions and it's acronym is SOBAD. The SOBAD method requires that classroom activities be observed by a person trained in it's proper use and interpretation.

The purpose of my research was to develop and test a method for observing classroom behavior that would identify teacher and student interactions as those interactions related to discipline problems. In pursuit of this purpose a rather extensive procedure was used to identify and develop ten observation categories. These ten categories are believed to identify all classroom behavior that can be disruptive. The categories are assigned the numbers "0" through "9" to make it easy and quick for the classroom observer to keep up with the various behaviors occurring in the classroom.

Two of the ten categories in this observation system refer to classroom behaviors involving both teacher and students and are described as, transition and instructional behavior. (These are the first two items on your handout.)

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Behaviors involving only the students are reflected in the next three categories shown on your handout and involve nonacademic talk, nonacademic activity, and classroom confusion. Four other categories identify specific teacher behaviors. These behaviors involve criticism, redirection, praise, and unnoticed disruptive behavior and are the last four items listed on your handout.

The remaining category number "5" on your handout refers to those disruptions of the academic mode that are not initiated by the teacher or the students. This type of disruption is also beyond the immediate control of the teacher and the acronym for this kind of disruption is most appropriately - DAMNITS.

These ten categories are an outgrowth of multiple validation steps that involve the accumulation of data from several sources. These sources included many classroom teachers, personal classroom observations, analysis of classroom video tapes and questionnaire responses received from a jury of nationally selected experts in the field of human behavior. Information received from these sources was used to identify, define, and validate the ten SOBAD system categories.

Further tests made on the SOBAD system focused on reliability. The establishment of reliability involved a twenty hour training program for three trainees. These trainees were taught to identify the ten behavior categories after which each trainee's ability was tested on fifteen different video tapes of actual classroom activity. These video tapes were restricted to grade levels four, five, and six. This restriction was placed on the SOBAD study to make it manageable and these grade levels were selected because they were believed to represent the widest possible range and variety of classroom discipline problems. After the trainees had finished identifying the behaviors they observed in the fifteen video tapes, their observations were compared and

an interobserver reliability of better than 0.75 was established.

Although the SOBAD system was found to be both valid and reliable it's real value lies in it's ability to help resolve daily classroom discipline problems. Therefore, educators who find it necessary to deal with the problems of classroom discipline on a daily basis will want to consider using the SOBAD system and should heed the following suggestions for it's use.

In order to properly use this system it is necessary to have an observer who has completed an appropriate training program in the use of the SOBAD system. Such a program would involve at least fifteen clock hours of training. The suggested format for this training involves an indepth study of the system ground rules, discussion of the coding or recording process, and extensive practice in coding classroom interactions using the system. Although video taping is not required for using the SOBAD system, video tapes of actual classroom activities will be required for proper training of the observers.

During a typical observation session, the trained observer will write the number representing the category for each teacher and student interaction observed. This activity of writing the category number is called coding and is done at least once every five seconds.

An example of data obtained during a typical classroom observation is presented on the top half of your second handout. Throughout this study the five second time interval was used for coding classroom interactions. However, such a procedure is optional. The observer might prefer to code the behavior categories only when a change in behavior takes place. Page two of your handouts also provides a comparison of both procedures. The raw data listed represents the same observation period. The longest set of numbers represents coding every five seconds while the short list represents data showing only category changes. Either procedure will provide (1) an account of verbal and

non-verbal teacher and student interactions related to academic disruptions; (2) the sequence in which these interactions occurred; (3) an indication of how various components within the classroom environment influenced classroom interactions; and (4) data upon which to increase teacher self-awareness of classroom interactions as they relate to discipline.

How can this information help resolve classroom discipline problems? Armed with this kind of information the teacher with the aid of the trained observer could closely examine the coded classroom interactions. Along with other researchers I believe that such an examination might identify for the teacher possible changes in self behavior that he may use to be more effective in diminishing discipline problems.

Therefore, using the SOBAD system for identifying and analyzing classroom discipline problems can result in improved classroom behavior and contribute to teacher and student satisfaction and morale. Removing discipline problems from the classroom will allow us as educators to perform the task for which we were intended and that is to teach rather than to police.

I would suggest the following as possible uses for the SOBAD system.

(1) Use the SOBAD system as a topic for teacher and/or administrator in-service training. Although teachers are not in a position to code their own classroom interactions, participation in such a program would increase the level of awareness for concerned teachers in terms of the cause, control, and effect of discipline problems.

(2) Use the SOBAD system as a topic for administrator workshops. Training in the use of the SOBAD system could remind, if not aid, the administrator in his awareness of the dilemma faced by teachers in the cause, control, and effect of discipline problems.

(3) Use the SOBAD system as a topic in teacher preparation programs. Such a preparation would provide a pragmatic view of classroom discipline and therefore reduce the stress of beginning teachers so frequently attributed to discipline problems.

An additional handout that briefly addresses such questions as who should be trained, the cost of training, where training is available, and the amount of time needed for training in the use of the SOBAD system is available for those interested in it's use. However, before making any decision concerning the use of the SOBAD system one must remember that the purpose of this system is not to evaluate teacher effectiveness. Those considering use of the SOBAD system are also reminded that it does not inherently contain a solution for classroom discipline, but rather serves as a method for educators to arrive at a possible solution.

Perhaps the future hope for improved classroom discipline can best be summarized with a play on words using the acronym SOBAD. "SOBAD or not SOBAD" that is not the question. SOBAD is the answer.

January, 1981

Handouts to accompany the following presentation:

Classroom Discipline Problems Have No Future: That's SOBAD!

Dr. Fran A. Lavergne
Texas A&M University

SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION OF BEHAVIOR WITH A FOCUS ON ACADEMIC DISRUPTIONS (SOBAD)

CATEGORY NUMBER	CATEGORY TITLE
0	TRANSITION
1	TEACHER AND/OR STUDENT TALK/ ACTIVITY (TASK ORIENTED OR INSTRUCTIONAL)
2	STUDENT TALK (NONINSTRUCTIONAL)
3	STUDENT ACTION (NONINSTRUCTIONAL)
4	CONFUSION
5	DISRUPTION OF ACADEMIC MODE, NOT INITIATED BY TEACHER OR STUDENT (DAMNITS)
6	CRITICISM
7	REDIRECTION
8	UNNOTICED DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR
9	PRAISING NONACADEMIC BEHAVIOR

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SOBAT data obtained during classroom observation using a 5 second time interval.

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0001900000004444093600000044444441111100000000011111111111111111111136
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11111000000000444444444961111111111111111111111111111111111111111111
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36111111111111111111111111111111111111111111111111111361111100000004444
4449444444444444000000001111110

SOBAD data obtained during the same classroom observation without the use of a 5 second time interval.

0101040936041013610496191361361049401O

INFORMATION CONCERNING SOBAD WORKSHOPS

Two types of SOBAD workshops are available.

I. OVERVIEW OF SOBAD SYSTEM

This format is intended for general information only and is not for training qualified classroom observers.
Time Involved: Approximately 3 clock hours

II. SOBAD TRAINING PROGRAM

This format is intended to qualify participants as classroom observers.
Time Involved: Approximately 15 clock hours not to exceed more than 3 hours per day.

The following information pertains to either type of workshop selected.

COST

Varies according to needs of the district or institution but in general would include: travel, meals, lodging, handout materials, and $100.00 per day for the speaker.

PARTICIPANTS

Teachers
Principals
Assistant Principals
Supervisors
Superintendants
Assistant Superintendants
University faculty involved in teacher preparation programs
Education region service center personnel

WHERE

Within your individual district or institution or at some central location as determined by several interested groups.

WHEN

Determined on an individual basis and controlled by the speaker's schedule.

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If you are interested in obtaining further information concerning the use, cost or availability of the SOBAD system please write to:

Dr. F. Lavergne
Texas A&M University
Educational Curriculum & Instruction
College Staion, Texas 77843

If you would prefer to call the number is (713) 845-6811. (Please leave name and number if calling.)